



*Developed and Presented by*

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- ▶ Preparation Prior to the Interview
- ▶ Factual Analysis and Evaluating the Alibi

# PREPARATION PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW

## I. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD ABUSERS

**PURPOSE:** It is important to be aware of the common characteristics of child abuse to facilitate question formulation. The reporter will usually identify the type of abuse that you are to investigate and assess. This will allow you an opportunity to formulate questions to determine if these common characteristics are present, which will enhance the quality of information you can develop in the initial interview.

## II. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF SEXUAL ABUSERS

### A. Setting up the opportunity

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

### B. Examples of Grooming:

1. Use flattery or act excited to see them. "Good to see you;" "Pretty dress;" "You look so pretty today;" etc.
2. Go out of their way to be helpful to child; homework.
3. Testing boundaries / Breaking barriers
  - Getting the child used to their touch by tickling, wrestling, general touching of the head or arm. Have child sit in their lap, rub their leg, put their arm around them.
  - Initiate discussions about sex or tell sexual jokes to test the child's sexual knowledge.
4. Present themselves as a fine upstanding member of the community who was being exceptionally kind to a child in need of attention.
5. Become knowledgeable of the child's level of interest and make the child feel as though they are very interested in the same things.
6. Help family out financially, or with car repairs, house repairs.
7. Take the family places.

8. Become socially involved to establish their reputation of a "nice guy" who goes out of his way to be helpful.
9. Always available to baby-sit.

C. Blaming

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D. Rationalizations

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

E. Manipulations

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Examples of Manipulation:

1. Tell the child "If you tell I'll go to jail."
2. Bargaining "one for one proposition."

3. Stepfather who tells his stepdaughter that her mother doesn't care about him and would not have sex with him. So there was nothing wrong with them having sex because he was not her real dad.
4. "If you tell, people will think bad of you."
5. Console them by telling the child that their parents or parent didn't care about them, or side with them in the conflicts the child is having with parents.
6. Try to drive a wedge between mother/ daughter or child and family.
7. Convince the child that he (offender) was the only one who loved them or cared about them.

F. Characteristics child molesters look for in a victim

1. A loner
2. A child who is looking for attention
3. Child from a single parent family
4. Child who has no siblings at home
5. Child who has already been abused ("damaged goods")
6. Child who comes from a dysfunctional family (physical abuse, substance abuse, because there is no one for them to report to)
7. Girls who carry themselves with an open confident way (sexually active)
8. A child whose credibility is in question
9. Boys who did not have a good relationship with their father
10. Children who seemed affectionate
11. Unsupervised girls in public places such as in a toy store, or toy department of a store, playgrounds, parks, neighborhoods, church

G. Common motives sexual offenders give for abuse

- 1.
- 2.

- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

H. Personality, characteristics and background of offenders

1. Outwardly religious
2. Workaholics
3. Emotionally immature
4. Poor relationship with their father
5. Alcohol or drug problem
6. Abused themselves as a child
7. Gives children gifts or money routinely
8. Experienced a recent crisis
9. Low self-esteem
10. Frequents locations where children are
11. Inadequate coping skills
12. Experiences feelings of powerlessness
13. Relates better to children
14. Isolated, emotionally and geographically
15. Emotional needs were not met by their own parents
16. Overcrowding in the home

### III. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF PHYSICAL CHILD ABUSERS

#### A. Rationalizations

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### B. Personality characteristics / background

1. Unconcerned about the child
2. Views child as a special child / prone to accidents
3. Unable to explain injury
4. Attempt to conceal injury
5. Unreasonable expectations of the child
6. Their own parents had high expectations of them
7. Poor parental role models
8. Shallow personal relationships
9. Strong disciplinarian
10. Poor impulse control

#### C. Common statements or explanations

1. "I've waited all this time to have a baby, and when she was born, she never did anything for me."
2. "When she cried, it meant she didn't love me."
3. "He falls down stairs over toys. I remember two or three times just last week."
4. "He bruises easily."
5. "He fell down a lot and bruised himself."
6. "When I saw he was not feeling well, I gave him an aspirin like before."

7. "I couldn't wake him for breakfast or dinner."
8. "I had to wait for my husband to come home."
9. "We couldn't get the car started."
10. "He fell down, cried a little, but was okay after that."
11. "I had to force him into the tub."
12. "He always had the colic."
13. "Heard you had a good hospital, that's why we drove 50 miles."
14. "We heard you had a good doctor."
15. "We tried calling our regular doctor, but he didn't answer the phone."
16. "When our doctor heard who wanted him, he wouldn't come."

#### IV. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF NEGLECT

- A. Chaotic home life
- B. Lives in unsafe conditions
- C. Has low intelligence
- D. Flat personality, not interested in anything
- E. Unsuccessful
- F. Emotional needs were not met by their own parents
- G. Passive
- H. Low motivation or skill to make changes in their life
- I. Alcohol or drug problem
- J. May be mentally handicapped
- K. Impulsive, seeks immediate gratification
- L. Low self-esteem

## SUBJECT DATA SHEET

					Subject's Names						Subject's Names						Subject's Names	
					Chaotic Home Life						Isolated						Isolated	
					Unsafe Conditions						Crisis						Crisis	
					Alcohol/Drug Prob.						Special Child						Outwardly Religious	
					Low Intelligence						Unconcerned						Workaholic	
					Flat Personality						Emotion. Retarded						Emotion. Retarded	
					Poor Impulse Control						Abused						Abused	
					Not Successful						Parental Role Mod.						Relat. w/Father	
					Emot. Needs Not Met	NEGLECT					High Expectations	PHYSICAL ABUSE					Alcohol/Drug Prob.	SEXUAL ABUSE
					Low Self-Esteem						Low Self-Esteem						Low Self-Esteem	
					Passive						Can't Explain Injury						Frequents Site w/Kids	
					Low Motivation/Skill						Attempt Conceal Inj.						Genuine Interest Kids	
					Mentally Retarded						Unreasonable Expect.						Ineffectual	
					Impulsive						Strong Discipline						Inadequate Coping	
					Low Self-Esteem						Poor Impulse Control						Relates Best to Kids	
											Shallow Relationship						Routinely Gives Gifts	
											Spouse Not Emot. Sup.						Friend/Relative/Neigh.	
					Addt'l Comments						Addt'l Comments						Addt'l Comments	



## SEXUAL ABUSE

1. Outwardly religious: Does the subject flaunt his/her religious affiliation?
2. Workaholics: Does the subject spend an unreasonable amount of time at work?
3. Emotionally retarded: Does the subject appear to be emotionally immature, insecure, resentful?
4. Poor relationship with father: Did the subject have a poor relationship with his father?
5. Alcohol or drug problem: Is the subject a frequent user of either? If so, what and how frequently?
6. Abused: Was the subject sexually or physically abused as a child?
7. Gives children gifts or money routinely: Does the subject give gifts or money to a child regularly at inappropriate times?
8. Crisis: Was there a recent crisis or series of crises that may have set the abusive act into action: lost job, marriage, separation, death in family, etc.
9. Low self-esteem: Does the subject see himself as worthless, no good?
10. Frequents locations where children are: (chicken hawk) Does subject frequently go to children's park, playgrounds, etc?
11. Given interest in children: (chicken hawk) Is subject viewed as "child's best friend?"
12. Inadequate coping skills: How does the subject handle stressful situations?
13. Ineffectual: Does subject appear to feel powerless, not in control?
14. Relates better to children: Is subject uncomfortable in adult world and more comfortable with children?
15. Friend, relative, neighbor: What is subject's relationship to victim?
16. Isolated: Is subject emotionally or geographically isolated from adult world?

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

1. Unconcerned about child: Does subject seem concerned about the child's well-being?
2. Special child: Does subject view child as being different from the other children in family?
3. Unable to explain injury: Does explanation of child's injury seem logical, convincing, without contradiction?
4. Attempt to conceal injury: Does the subject seem unwilling to acknowledge and expose the child's injury?
5. Unreasonable expectation of child: Does the subject believe that the child should not be given into, or allowed to get away with anything?
6. Subject to high expectations: Did subject's parents have high expectations of them?
7. Poor parental role models: Did subject's parents abuse, neglect or deprive subject as a child?
8. Shallow personal relationship: Does subject have a shallow personal relationship with spouse, girlfriend or boyfriend?
9. Strong discipline: Does the subject employ harsh, unreasonable discipline which is inappropriate to child's age, transgressions and conditions?
10. Poor impulse control: Does subject seek immediate gratification without regard to long-term consequences?

## NEGLECT

1. Chaotic home life: Does subject's home life seem disorganized, confused?
2. Live in unsafe conditions: Does subject have garbage, excrement in living areas, exposed wiring, drugs and poisons within children's reach?
3. Low intelligence: Does subject have low I.Q., partially retarded?
4. Flat personality: Does subject seem to lack interest in anything?
5. Not successful: Has the subject experienced much success in life?
6. Emotional needs not met by parents: Was the subject shown love and nurturing from his parents?
7. Passive: Does subject seem unconcerned about most things?
8. Low motivation or skill to make changes in their lives: Does subject seem unwilling to improve life situation?
9. Mentally retarded
10. Impulsive: Seeks immediate gratifications without regard for long-term consequences?
11. Low self-esteem: Does the subject see himself as worthless or no good?

# FACTUAL ANALYSIS AND EVALUATING THE ALIBI

## I:

### A. PRIMARY GOALS OF EVALUATING AN ALIBI

1. Attempt to establish the ACCESS, MOTIVE and OPPORTUNITY by exploring the following:
  - a. The RELATIONSHIP with the child.
  - b. PRECIPITATORS: Factors and circumstances that contribute to the decision to commit an offense.
  - c. PROPENSITY: Established behavioral patterns and attitudes consistent with the abuse.
2. First ask for a general account of what happened.
  - a.
  - b.
  - d.

### B. CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUTHFUL ALIBI

Example: Child's face was burned in the last 24 hours.

1. Truthful account
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  - f.
  - g.

#### EXAMPLE:

“Johnny was playing on the floor of the bedroom and I was ironing in the bedroom. Sesame Street was on TV. The telephone rang and I had to go into the kitchen to answer it. It was my sister and I talked to her for a couple of minutes and then I heard Johnny crying. I ran back to the bedroom and he had pulled the iron down and was burned on his face right here. I put ice on it and then called my sister back to find out what else I could do. She said to cover the burn with butter and give him some aspirin, so I did. I was going to take him to the emergency room but he stopped crying and seemed to be better so I just kept it cool with ice. I feel really terrible about letting this happen.”

#### C. CHARACTERISTICS OF A DECEPTIVE ALIBI

##### Deceptive account

- a. Description will primarily focus on event with minimal introduction and conclusion. May contain skips and jumps in chronology.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.

#### EXAMPLE:

“My sister called on the phone and when we finished talking I went back to my ironing and the iron must have fallen on Johnny because he had a burn on his face. You see I was ironing before the phone call from my sister. That’s pretty much it.”

# GUIDELINES FOR RE-QUESTIONING THE SUBJECT ON THEIR ALIBI

I:

A. Make **EVASION** and **OMISSION** more difficult by:

1.

2.

*Example follow-up questions to the deceptive alibi concerning the child burned with the iron;*

I: "Were you in the same room as Johnny when he got burned?"

C: "Well, no, the phone is in the next room."

I: "How many feet away from him were you when he got burned?"

C: "Um, I don't know, several."

I: "Did you see Johnny touch the iron?"

C: "No, I didn't see anything."

I: "Did you hear the iron fall?"

C: "No, I didn't hear anything."

I: "What was Johnny doing when you came back into the room?"

C: "He was just sitting on the floor near the iron, crying."

I: "What did you do when you saw him and the iron on the floor?"

C: "I yelled at him a little."

I: "How did you feel?"

C: "I told him not to play around the ironing board when the iron was hot."

B. Avoid asking **negative questions**

Improper: "So, you didn't touch him with it?"

Proper: \_\_\_\_\_

Improper: "So, you didn't put your hand in her pants?"

Proper: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Avoid using unnecessary **memory qualifiers** in direct questions

Improper: "Do you remember touching him with the iron?"

Proper: "Did you touch him with the iron?"

Improper: "Do you remember putting your hand in her pants?"

Proper: "Did you put your hand in her pants?"

D. Avoid **combining two issues** within one question

Improper: "Did you put your finger or any object in her vagina?"

Proper: \_\_\_\_\_

E. Ask **follow-up questions** on evasive responses

Example:

Q: Mike, did Sheila come to your classroom after school yesterday afternoon?

R: Students frequently come to my classroom after school.

FOQ: *I understand, but did Sheila come to your classroom after school yesterday afternoon?*

R: I'm not sure.

FOQ: *Did any students come to your classroom after school yesterday afternoon?*

R: Yes.

FOQ: *Was one of them Sheila.*

R: Yes, I think so.

1. Responding to **Specific Denials**:

Q: "Do you know who caused the injuries to Robert?"

R: "I haven't heard any rumors."

FOQ:

2. Responding to **Memory Qualifiers**:

Q: "Did Mary ever come on to you in a sexual way?"

R: "Not that I can remember."

FOQ:

3. Responding to **Delayed Responses**:

Q: "Since you have been an adult, what is the age of the youngest person you had sexual contact with?"

R: "Um....."

FOQ:

4. Responding to **Admissions**:

Q: "What was the last thing Marty did to make you angry?"

R: "Well... his teacher called and said he hasn't been turning in his homework and he told me he had turned it in."

FOQ:

- F. Encourage **TRUTHFULNESS** and **IDENTIFY ATTITUDES** by;
1. Offering **face-saving statements** to encourage the subject to make minor admissions revealing incriminating information.
    - a.
      1. “Do you think you may have absentmindedly...”
      2. “Is it possible that you...”
      3. “Is there a chance that...”
    - b.

Examples:

**During the interview** the subject says, “When we got up she lost her balance and fell backwards.”

**Face saving statement –**

**During the interview** the subject says, “Yea, (child) has walked in on me when I just stepped out of the shower.”

**Face saving statement –**

**During the interview** the subject says, “Yea, I have wrestled around or tickled (child) on occasion.”

**Face saving statement –**

2. Introduce a question with a face saving scenario

(Contrast two behaviors – one more serious than the other.)

Example:

“Mike, one thing that all parents have in common is that sometimes their children’s misbehavior upsets them. When this happens people react in different ways. some parents fly off the handle at the slightest thing on a daily basis, whereas others get upset once in a while, especially when they are under a lot of stress.”

“Mike, when was the last time you got really upset at (victim) because of something he did or said?”

## II: EVALUATING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILD

PRINCIPLE: Many child abusers **view the child as partially responsible** for the abuse, and the relationship between the subject and the child will become affected. Deceptive subjects will often acknowledge a variety of circumstances to try to “explain away” the child’s accusation of sexual abuse, or the child’s frequent physical injuries. Therefore it is important to ask questions that:

- a. Attempt to establish presence of circumstances that would lead to the abuse.
- b. Attempt to determine if the subject, in some way, views the child’s behavior as being sexually provocative or emphasizes negative characteristics of the child.

### A. Physical Abuse Cases

1. How would you \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Do you consider (child) to be \_\_\_\_\_?  
Where do injuries usually occur?
3. How would you describe \_\_\_\_\_?
4. How is (child) \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Do you approve \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Is (child) hyper? Obedient? \_\_\_\_\_?



7. How does (child) \_\_\_\_\_?
8. What is the most common thing that (child) \_\_\_\_\_ where you have to discipline him/her?
9. What is the \_\_\_\_\_ you have used with (child)?
10. Is there any time that you felt \_\_\_\_\_ in your punishment? (Explain)
11. How often \_\_\_\_\_ (child)? Under what circumstances?
12. Has (child) ever physically struck you? Threatened you? If yes, how did you respond?
13. How would you rate yourself as a disciplinarian on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very lenient and 10 being very strict?

**B. Typical Descriptions From Deceptive Subjects**

1. Subject may describe the child as **unusually difficult** and **physically aggressive**.
2. Subject may describe the child as **accident prone**.
3. Subject expresses **anger** or **disappointment** in the child.
4. Subject may have **unreasonable expectations** of the child and become overly critical of the child.

**C. Sexual Abuse Cases**

1. How would you \_\_\_\_\_?
2. How would you describe \_\_\_\_\_?
3. How would you describe \_\_\_\_\_?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 knowing nothing and 10 knowing everything, how would you rate (child's) sexual knowledge?
5. Has (child) \_\_\_\_\_ flirted with you?
6. Did you ever have \_\_\_\_\_ with (child)?

7. Does (child) ever \_\_\_\_\_?
8. Do you and (child) \_\_\_\_\_?
9. Has (child) ever told you that another person tried to do something \_\_\_\_\_?
10. Do you think (child) \_\_\_\_\_?
11. Does (child) have a reputation of \_\_\_\_\_?

**D. Typical Descriptions From Deceptive Subjects**

1. Subject may describe the child as an **untrustworthy** source of information.
2. Subject may describe the child as **sexually aware** and mature for her age.
3. Subject has **unusual control** over the child.
4. Subject may describe the child as being **sexually promiscuous**.
5. Subject may be **overly protective** toward the child.

**III. EVALUATING PRECIPITATORS**

- A. Definition: Factors and circumstances that contribute to the decision to commit the crime.
- B. Types of Precipitators:
  1. Probability of non-detection
    - a.
    - b.
    - c. Suggested questions
      1. How often are you alone with (child)?
      2. Do you baby-sit for (child)?
      3. Do you take (child) out socially?

2. Alcohol or Drug Intoxication (affected Judgement)
  - a. Suggested questions
    1. How would you describe your drinking or drug use?
    2. Do you ever drink (use drugs) when you are home alone with (child)?
3. Occupational or Personal Stress
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d. Suggested questions
    1. How would you describe your relationship with your spouse – do you share responsibilities with the children?
    2. How would you describe your financial situation?
    3. How are things going at work? Any problems with supervisor? Co-workers?
    4. How would you describe your relationship with your spouse/girlfriend?
4. Emotional Precipitators
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d. Suggested questions
    1. How do you react when (child) \_\_\_\_\_?

5. Opportunity (Temptation)
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  - f. Suggested questions
    1. Has (child) slept in your bed? How often?  
Were you alone? What were you, (child), wearing?
    2. Have you given (child) a bath/shower? How often?  
When was the last time?
    3. Has (child) taken a bath or shower with you?
    4. Has (child) ever seen you engage in any sexual behavior? *(for example: masturbating and they walk in on you or were hiding in the room? Sex with another person?)*

#### IV. EVALUATING PROPENSITY

- A. Principle: A person guilty of child abuse will have established behavioral patterns and attitudes consistent with the abuse; a person does not wake up one morning and suddenly decide to abuse their child.
- B. Indications of propensity for sexual abuse
  1. Previously accused or suspected of sex crime
  2. Collections or pornographic material
  3. Previous sexual experiences with children
  4. Being sexually abused as a child

**C. Question to Determine Propensity for Sexual Abuse Cases**

1. Have you ever been questioned before about having sexual contact with a child?
2. Besides for traffic violations, have you ever been talked to by the police? *(look for indecent exposure, obscene phone calls, shoplifting women's or children's panties, voyeurism, and other sexually related offenses)*
3. What kind of sexually explicit magazines, videos, etc. do you have at home? Do you think (child) has seen these?
4. What is the age of the youngest person you had sexual contact with since you've been an adult? How old were you at the time?
5. When you were young did you ever have sexual contact with an adult?

**D. Indications of Propensity for Physical Abuse**

1. Physically abused as a child
2. Short temper, reputation for loss of emotional control
3. Physically aggressive behavior towards others
4. Police record for assault or battery
5. Previously accused or suspected of assault

**E. Questions to Ask About the Subject's Background to Establish Propensity for Physical Abuse**

1. Have you ever been questioned before about causing an injury to a child?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being very lenient and 10 being very strict, how would you rank yourself as a disciplinarian?
3. When you were young how did your parents discipline you?
4. Besides for traffic violations, have you ever been talked to by the police? (*look for domestic violence, assault and battery, disorderly conduct*)
5. Have you ever been questioned about hurting another person?
6. When is the last time you had a physical altercation with other person?